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**From:** Hugh Harwell [hughharwell@earthlink.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 19, 2009 12:18 PM  
**To:** Williams, Catrice (DTC)  
**Subject:** Verizon's Poor Service Quality in Shutesbury

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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Dear Secretary Williams--

I have just learned from a friend that you are initiating an investigation of Verizon's perpetual service problems here in Shutesbury. That is good news. I am sure that all of us living here would be most grateful if you are able to perform a thorough and fair examination of all the relevant issues attendant to their poor services and facilitate durable improvements.

To aid your data collection and assessment, I am writing to share my own experiences over the past 11 years of my residency here in Shutesbury.

In addition to the expected outages whenever there is a major storm or close lightning strike, I have frequently observed that some (often many) phone lines in the neighborhood here on Baker Road go out or have substantial static interference during and after common high humidity, rain and wet snow events, not every time, but often enough to indicate a clear pattern of equipment deficiencies. On occasion those problems continue for several hours or even a few days before they either dry out or are corrected.

Through a number of conversations with several Verizon technicians over the years, they have informed me that those problems are often difficult for them to track down and commonly occur because the equipment the company has provided at various junction points where wires are connected to each other is old and has not been upgraded for many years. I deduce therefore that it either has intrinsic design flaws or has deteriorated in ways that make it highly susceptible to moisture interference.

As it happens, just two days ago I encountered a most mysterious problem on my phone line. The weather was clear and sunny, nevertheless, for several hours during the day I experienced intermittent absence of dial tone, loud static, strange tones and normal dial tone coming and going every few minutes. Since I have somewhat gotten used to phone problems being one cost of rural living, and since the problems stopped after awhile and normal dial tone returned consistently, I did not call Verizon to complain or request repairs.

I hope this information is useful in your investigation and that you can promptly find and institute systemic solutions that will benefit all rural phone users.

Please contact me if you need any more specific information about my observations.

Thank you for your service and assistance.

Sincerely,

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